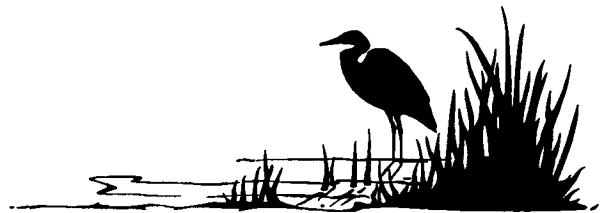


PUBLIC USE PLAN

TEWAUKON NATIONAL

WILDLIFE COMPLEX

1995 Update



I. Background

A. Refuge Information:

Managed Units

Tewaukon NWR (2 tracts).....	8,438
Storm Lake, Lake Elsie, Wild Rice Esmt Refuges (3 tracts).....	2,100
Wetland Management District (Sargent, Ransom, Richland Co.)...	13,133
Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA)	
(103 tracts in 56 clusters in 3 counties)	
Waterfowl Production Area Easements.....	31,736
(525 contracts in 3 counties)	
Farmer's Home Administration (FmHA) Easements.....	941
TOTAL ACRES MANAGED.....	56,273

Purpose of Establishment

REFUGE: Created as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife.

WETLAND MANAGEMENT DISTRICT: To assure the continued availability of habitat capable of supporting migratory bird populations.

Primary Refuge and WPA Management Programs

1) Water Management: Water levels in impoundments are raised or lowered to provide the best possible migratory bird nesting and feeding habitat.

2) Grassland Management: Short duration grazing, controlled burning, and re-seeding are used to maintain tall dense cover utilized by upland nesting birds.

3) Fisheries Management: Tewaukon and Sprague Lakes are managed for their sport fish populations of walleye, northern pike, and perch.

4) Public Use: Public use programs that are compatible with Refuge objectives include: fishing, trapping, pheasant and deer hunting (special seasons), hiking, picnicking, photography and wildlife observation.

5) Education and Outreach: Different approaches used to communicate the purpose of the Refuge and wildlife management include: bi-weekly news releases, annual visits to each of the three county schools, staffing a booth at county fairs, and increasing the number of school groups visiting the refuge. The Refuge visitor and Educational Center has recently been remodeled and an interpretive hiking trail and auto tour has been discussed.

6) Cropland Management: Approximately 800 acres of Refuge land and 100 acres of WPA lands are farmed by local cooperators to provide food for migrating birds and winter resident species.

B. Public Use Facility, Publications, and Opportunity Inventory

1. Facilities:

Office and Environmental Education Center

In 1992, Tewaukon completed the renovation of the visitor/education center. The visitor center/education will include a variety of interpretive displays that describe the prairie pothole ecosystems, snow geese and waterfowl migration, the role of the Tewaukon Complex in waterfowl production, historical, and archeological perspectives of the area, the Refuge System, private lands programs, and neotropical birds. Currently plans include the development of one or more of these displays on an annual basis if funding becomes available. A wetlands diorama was completed in 1992 and the archaeological exhibit was completed in 1993. One of the larger rooms in the center accommodate some of the interpretive exhibits and can also be used as a conference meeting room or to house special exhibits such as the Hollingsworth's photo exhibit of the NWR System that was shown in the fall of 1992 and the North Dakota Junior Duck Stamp Display in 1994.

Kiosks And Information Centers

Five informational kiosks are located on the Refuge. Currently there are two USFWS 3 panel style kiosks at the Visitor Center; one is attached to the building. Both visitor center kiosks are fitted with leaflet dispensers and changeable panel holders. The other three kiosks are smaller models are located at the Lake Tewaukon picnic area, boat ramps and Sprague Lake. All the kiosks have distribution boxes for pamphlets and brochures and boards to post seasonal information regarding public use. Plans are to provide an two or three panel interpretive kiosk on the Point that would include information one fishing and/or the archaeological values of the area. Plans to replace all except the kiosks at the office are in a MMS package to be completed in 1995.

Boat Ramps

Boat ramps are located on Lake Tewaukon and Sprague Lake in two locations on each lake. A new moveable boat dock was purchased and donated by the Cogswell Gun and Tewaukon Rod and Gun club has been placed along side the Tewaukon south dock. Work remains to make the access to two of our boat ramps compatible with accessibility

standards. Plans are to replace all boat ramps with two of the boat ramps made accessible using MMS funding in 1995.

Tewaukon Picnic Area and Lakeshore

A large picnic area is located on the east shore of Lake Tewaukon. The picnic area has six picnic tables and barbecue grills as well as rest room facilities and a hand pump well. In 1994 the old outdoor restrooms were replaced with new accessible unisex restrooms. This is also the area where a roll in dock for fishing access is located. In 1994 a concrete parking pad and walkway were added to make the dock accessible. In 1992 a new picnic shelter was donated by the Cogswell Gun and Tewaukon Rod and Gun Club and two picnic tables and grill were retrofitted to make the shelter accessible to the disabled. In 1994 a concrete walkway system between the picnic shelter and restroom was completed along with parking pads at the shelter and restroom.

The remainder of the shoreline around the lake has four other access locations that are kept mowed to accommodate sight seers and anglers. A second restroom facility and small picnic area with one picnic table is located on the west shore of the lake at one of these areas.

A peninsula that extends into Lake Tewaukon is a popular recreational fishing area and wildlife viewing area. Several locations along the point are mowed to accommodate these uses.

Directional Signs

A series of permitted/prohibited activity signs are located around Lake Tewaukon indicating which activities are acceptable in the portion of the Refuge open to hiking and exploring. The signs indicate that hiking, wildlife observation, picnicking and fishing are allowed and camping, fires, firearms, and swimming are prohibited. Refuge hours are also listed. These signs are showing considerable wear and will be updated and replaced with MMS in 1995. Additional regulatory signs such as hunter parking signs, no hunting Refuge right of way signs and area closed to hunting signs are also used in addition to directional signs identifying the location of the office complex and boundary signs.

2. Publications

Below is a list of refuge Specific pamphlets:

- Refuge information brochure
- Refuge map
- Educational opportunities
- Young people's wildlife checklist
- Public use summaries (Fall, Winter, Spring & Summer)
- Tewaukon bird list

In 1994 the Refuge map was updated and replaced.

Work has been started on developing a Refuge hunting map to visually delineate areas that are described in the Public Use Summary (See Hunting).

The Refuge informational brochure is in need of updating and will need replacing in the future.

Development of a publication that would display a map of all the WPA's in the district with the public use opportunities available is contingent on the availability of funding.

3. Recreation Opportunities

Fishing

Lake Tewaukon and Sprague Lake contain locally popular recreational fisheries. Fishing is allowed in accordance with ND State seasons and regulations on the two lakes. Limited boat fishing is allowed on both lakes but motors are limited to 50 H.P. or less due to severe erosion problems with shorelines. Ice fishing and bank fishing are very popular. On both lakes, boating is limited from April 1-April 30 and October 1 to October 31 as populations of migratory waterfowl on the lake increase. Access to Lake Tewaukon ice is also limited due to thin ice caused by a lake aeration system.

Commercial fishing for rough fish (carp, suckers, and bullheads) is permitted to enhance sport fishing on Lake Tewaukon.

Hunting

The Tewaukon Unit and the Sprague Lake Unit are open to special hunting seasons. All Refuge lands except around the office and shop are open to early and late archery deer hunting. The 16½ day deer gun hunting season on the Refuge is by permit only. The

Refuge pheasant season begins in late November and includes all Refuge lands except the Point and the area around the office and shop. Steel shot is required to hunt pheasants on Refuge land. There is no waterfowl hunting season on the Refuge.

A brochure describing hunting seasons and open areas used in tandem with the Refuge map is currently used to orient hunters. A pamphlet containing the regulations and a map depicting areas open to hunting is currently being developed to visually orient hunters and help them identify closed and open areas more readily.

Waterfowl Production Areas are open to public hunting and follow State regulations. Waterfowl hunting is allowed on all WPA's except on Englevale Slough which is a designated State of North Dakota waterfowl rest area.

As part of universal access planning (see #4) the Refuge and WPA hunting program was modified to accommodate those with disabilities. We communicated with the disabled public through news releases and in house brochures that opportunities are available for the disabled. Special use permits can be issued for those with disabilities on a case by case basis allowing vehicle access on interior trails and farm fields for big game and upland bird hunting. Several spots that lend themselves to landing ramps for waterfowl hunters are being evaluated but gravel surfacing would be a barrier at these sites.

Recreational Trapping

The Refuge is divided into five trapping units and trappers must bid for a fall season unit. Trappers may take red fox, skunk, mink, raccoon, and in special instances beaver. Trappers are required to operate after 2:00 p.m. to minimize disturbance to waterfowl until major concentrations of geese have left the area.

Trapping is allowed on any of the Waterfowl Production Areas through Special Use permits.

Hiking and Exploration

That portion of the Refuge located east of County Road 12 is open to hiking, photography, and exploration as identified in Refuge brochure. An interpretative learning and hiking trail is currently being developed for the Refuge. Plans include a partially ~~of~~ fully accessible hiking trail, will be either or a partially mowed trail or soilcrete and will include a low-lying observation platform. Interpretation will take place through interpretive signs or leaflet. The proposed trail takes the visitor through various

habitats found on the Refuge. Accessibility for the hearing impaired can take place through the use of a cassette tape loan system.

4. Universal Access

A universal access evaluation of programs and facilities was conducted in 1992 with the help of staff representatives from three other refuges and a disabled gentleman from the Fargo VA. A list of the program changes and facility adaptations for accessibility compliance are listed on the last page of this plan.

5. Public Outreach and Environmental Education

The Adopt-A-WPA program was started in 1989 with the Sargent County Pheasants club adopting the Klefstad, Asche, and Mahrer WPAs. This program involves matching funds and the sportsmen develop a management plan for their WPAs and then conduct the management treatments.

Tewaukon offers staff guided tours to large groups and programs on the Refuge. Staff also respond to requests from schools, groups, clubs etc. for environmental programs off site. Each year the Tewaukon staff travels to fifteen local schools during National Wildlife Week to give programs.

Since 19 the Tewaukon Refuge in conjunction with the North Dakota Extension Service and local wildlife clubs have held the Tewaukon Field Days at the Refuge. Youngsters are invited from around the area to come spend a day at the Refuge. Programs include a nature hike, casting contest, three wildlife programs, and a nature movie.

Tewaukon Refuge travels to county fairs each year to set up a booth to answer questions and increase exposure to the public.

In 1993 the Tewaukon Refuge agreed to host the North Dakota Junior Duck Stamp Contest. Students from around the state sent in their artwork to be judged. The Best of Show then travels to Washington D.C. The Refuge also hosted a awards banquet in Bismarck and collected donations from several sportsmen and wildlife groups to provide lodging, prizes, and money for meals.

II. Visitor Characteristics

The majority of the visitors to the Refuge and the District come from the more populated towns such as Wahpeton and Fargo. The visitors are generally consumptive in nature although the number of nonconsumptive

users has been increasing as more wildlife and bird watchers visit the Refuge every year. The number of local people that visit the Refuge are also mainly consumptive. A number of local groups and educational groups visit the Refuge annually for tours and programs.

III. Public Use Goals and Programs

Environmental Education Promotion

GOAL: Expand on the opportunities for the Refuge and other agencies to join with state and local governments, the private sector, and associations to promote environmental education in the surrounding community.

STRATEGIES:

- 1) An Educational Opportunities pamphlet was developed in 1990 for distribution to schools, clubs, and organizations that list a variety of environmental programs and activities offered at Tewaukon National Wildlife Refuge. Follow-up contacts should be made every September with the parties on this mailing list. Spring contacts are currently made during National Wildlife Week (see #3).
- 2) Continue to host and develop Tewaukon Field Days. The Refuge annually serves as the host for a multi-county, multi-agency field days. Stations are set up to introduce young people to various aspects of fish and wildlife biology and management.
- 3) Refuge employees continue to increase their participation in the local school systems with programs every year during National Wildlife Week. Staff continue to respond to various requests for presentations at career days, science classes and others. School groups are encouraged to visit the refuge.
- 4) Project WILD and Project WET classes are held if there is deemed to be enough interest. Refuge personnel hold classes for educators in order to provide them with new methods and ideas for including natural resource educational information in their curriculums. Teachers are contacted every two years to determine the interest level. In 1994 Tewaukon and Sand Lake NWR's held a one day teachers workshop on WOW!- Wonder of Wetlands.
- 5) Refuge personnel participate with community and sportsmen's club members in teaching wildlife sections of hunter education courses upon request. Staff members regularly teach at the Milnor, Wyndmere, Forman, and Lidgerwood spring sessions.

- 6) USFWS personnel participate in Conservation tours for seventh graders in each of our three counties. Wetland values and the Refuge system are the topics of discussion.
- 7) The Visitor Center was remodeled in 1992. One of the eight proposed educational and interpretative displays, a wetlands diorama, was also installed. The diorama depicts three wetland types and associated wildlife and plants. A Native American artifact storage and interpretative display has been developed and was installed in 1993. Ideas for the other six displays are as follows: 1) a wildlife pictorial collage, 2) snow goose display (complete with a mount of a snow goose, pictures, and a video loop program), 3) a touch table, 4) renovation of the aerial photographs of the Refuge, 5) panel on neotropical birds, and 6) interpretive panel describing the Tewaukon Wetland Management District. The center has a multi purpose audio-visual room available for programs and meetings. Opening the center on weekends especially during the hunting season will be considered as well as developing periodic programs to attract, entertain, and inform visitors. The Rutland/Cayuga Senior Citizens volunteered their time in the summer of 1992 and 1993 to keep the Visitor Center open on weekends (See Volunteer Section)
- 8) The development of a site-specific curriculum that would allow teachers to conduct self sufficient field trips is being discussed. Curriculum would match the state or county educational requirements.
- 9) Continue to work with the sportsmen's groups involved in the Adopt-A-WPA program and develop new cooperations with interested groups.

Landowner Relations

GOAL: Recognize private property rights and maintain good landowner relationships.

STRATEGIES:

- 1) Neighbors are kept informed whenever Refuge activities may impact private landowners. Information about controlled burning activities and plans is provided to adjacent landowners.
- 2) Landowners adjacent to the Refuge have been provided with additional signing materials so that they can adequately post their farm sites, and keep Refuge hunters aware of the fact that there are inhabited structures nearby.
- 3) Landowner permission is always obtained before Refuge personnel enter private land to gather waterfowl census data or determine nest success on waterfowl nesting structures placed on private land.

- 4) The Refuge annually provides a list of weed control efforts and roadside mowing data (activities required by state and local law) on Service lands to county commissioners, weed boards, and water boards. The Refuge continues to use neighbors to complete some roadside mowing of Refuge and most District lands.
- 5) Contracts with private landowners are modified to address landowner concerns. Statements are included in CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) contracts and extension program contracts to ensure landowners of their rights and responsibilities.

Community Outreach

GOAL: Provide access to information on Refuge management and wildlife ecology to the general public.

STRATEGIES:

- 1) Bi-monthly news releases are prepared and distributed to newspapers in within a 150 mile radius promoting recreational opportunities and discussing management activities on the Refuge. This circulation covers half of the total population in North Dakota. The Refuge is trying to increase the number of news releases to one every week.
- 2) The local press, including television reporters are invited to cover refuge events such as seining Lake Tewaukon for rough fish, winter deer surveys, annual fishing tournament, opening day of hunting season, etc.
- 3) The Refuge holds a bi-yearly public meeting to address concerns and questions from the public. Additional public meetings are also held when Refuge activities are likely to generate a great deal of community interest or controversy.
- 4) Refuge pamphlets are available at the office, picnic area, boat ramps, local businesses, and upon request. The Tewaukon Refuge General Information Pamphlet, Tewaukon map, Tewaukon Bird List, Young People's Check List, and bi-annual Public Use Summaries all are specific for the Refuge. The development of a hunting pamphlet with map of WMD and regulations, fishing regulations, archaeological pamphlet is being explored.
- 5) When possible the Refuge attends local county fairs and shows providing information on the Refuge with displays and pamphlets.
- 6) Many of the directional and regulatory signs that are starting to fade and show wear need to be replaced and updated. The current entrance

sign at the visitor center is old and faded, and will be replaced with a new, standard entrance sign. Other entrance signs located throughout the Refuge will be replaced with the standard entrance sign as warranted.

- 7) Refuge staff attend local sportsmen and wildlife club meetings and provide a Refuge report on activities and events.

Recreation Opportunities

GOAL: Provide a variety of quality recreational opportunities (experiences) consistent to our goals and management objectives for the refuges.

STRATEGIES:

- 1) Hunting, fishing, photography, hiking, bird watching, and picnicking are some of the recreational opportunities currently offered on the Tewaukon refuge and WMD. Plans to increase these opportunities are being explored. Photo blinds and improved fishing access on Lake Tewaukon are currently being developed. Accessibility is handled through special permits and special provisions. Plans are to update the Hunting and Fishing Plans.
- 2) A self-guided auto tour has been developed and is awaiting funding.
- 3) Plans to complete an interpretative nature trail are underway. Several sites that would provide a look at wetland ecology along with grassland habitats are being evaluated.
- 4) Currently, seasonal public use summaries are being used to help direct hunters and anglers to the open areas and the regulations. A specific hunting and fishing opportunities leaflet with maps and detailed regulations are being discussed.

Political Involvement

GOAL: Develop ideas to increase the Refuge's exposure to local and state political groups and officials. Identify and contact local support groups. Invite local these groups to participate in refuge management activities. Provide information directly to support groups

STRATEGIES:

- 1) An annual Lake Tewaukon Take Pride in America fishing tournament is coordinated with the Refuge and two local sportsmen's groups. The Refuge will continue to encourage the support of these clubs and publicize other participation and contributions to the Refuge.

- 2) A photographic portrait of the refuge and management activities has been developed to display at the Visitor Center and at Refuge events.
- 3) A draft information sheet for Federal Congressional Aides on the Refuge Complex has been developed. Annual visits to Congressional Aides will be made to discuss issues and develop a rapport. Sending information sheets to state legislators should be considered as well.
- 4) Invite local and state politicians out for Refuge tours, open houses, public meetings, and management activities.
- 5) Continue to attend local government and township board meetings.

Interagency Cooperation

GOAL: Develop and integrate cooperation and coordination among State and Federal Natural Resource Managing Agencies.

STRATEGIES:

- 1) Refuge personnel have worked closely with the Valley National Hatchery to develop a quality fishery in Lake Tewaukon. Programs have been implemented with the involvement of area sportsmen's groups when possible and include: stocking, spawning, rough fish removal, structure placement and aeration.
- 2) Food and Agricultural committee meetings are attended in Ransom County. Employees of the USFS, SCS, ASCS, FmHA, and others meet monthly in order to share information and discuss opportunities to work jointly.
- 3) Refuge employees regularly attend meetings of the SE Crime Conference in order to coordinate efforts and exchange information with area L.E. agency which may involve refuge user groups.
- 4) Maintain regular attendance at ND Game and Fish Advisory Board meetings in order to listen to recommendations from the public and plans from the state concerning area hunting regulations, seasons, and suggestions which could have refuge and district implications.
- 5) The Complex will proceed promptly to provide information on the recreation opportunities and activities on federal lands so it can be entered into privately operated state, regional and national recreation information networks that are readily available to recreation consumers.
- 6) Refuge personnel will continue to assist people who wish to sell land by referring information to the Bureau of Reclamation for use in meeting mitigation requirements of the Garrison Diversion project. These lands are open to a variety of recreational activities.

- 7) Refuge personnel will continue to play a role in the Bureau of Reclamation's efforts to buy up to 5,000 acres for a Refuge in the Kraft Slough area as stipulated in the Garrison Diversion Reformulation Act of 1985. The Refuge Manager serves as a consultant to the Bureau while they acquire land with the state, county and individual landowners.

Private Partnerships

GOAL: Encourage cooperative private Partnerships to expand recreation opportunities close to home.

STRATEGIES:

- 1) Refuge personnel have worked with the local community to incorporate suggestions for improving recreation opportunities which arise from public meetings, sportsmen's club meetings, county commissioner's meetings, golf course association meetings and others.
- 2) Refuge personnel regularly respond to requests and inquiries from civic and church groups as well as youth groups such as 4-H, Boy Scouts, and school groups to hold special functions that involve the Refuge.
- 3) From June through October in 1992 the Refuge hosted some of Karen & John Hollingsworth's wildlife photographic work. On October 25 the Refuge hosted an open house to publicize the exhibit, tour the new visitor center, show off the new wetlands diorama, and encourage visitation from the regional community.

Volunteers

GOAL: The Refuge should expand the opportunity and publicize the satisfaction and effectiveness of volunteerism on public lands.

STRATEGIES:

- 1) Several programs have been introduced over the past three years in order to increase volunteerism on refuge lands including Adopt-A-WPA (Waterfowl Production Area) by sportsmen's groups.
- 2) A volunteer program was initiated in 1987 and has continued into 1993. Volunteers have helped with the mallard release on the Stack Slough project, nest dragging for waterfowl on selected areas, islands, tubs, and bales, running the bluebird trail, planting shrubs on islands, and facility maintenance. Each year an effort has been made to recruit college students and AARP senior citizens interested in spending the season on the Refuge.
- 3) In 1992 and 1993 the senior citizens volunteers from Rutland & Cayuga staffed the Visitor Center on Saturdays and Sundays during the summer.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	COST ESTIMATE	EST. YR. COMPLETE	YEAR COMPLETED
Complete Public Use Mgmt Plan	--	1993	1993
Retrofit or upgrade outdoor restroom		1993	1994
Construct asphalt or concrete pad in parking lot		1993	1993
Correct access of accessible fishing pier		1993	1994
Develop trail to connect picnic shelter, parking lot, and rest rooms		1994	1994
Develop large print script for Refuge brochures	----	1993	1993
Replace all regulatory signs;	7,000	1995	
Replace headquarters entrance sign	4,800	1995	
Work with appropriate highway personnel to install directional signs for headquarters	----	1994	1993
Revise general Refuge leaflet	3,000	1995	
Revise Refuge map	3,000	1993	1994
Visitor Center exhibits			
Snow goose panel/video loop	30,000	1996	
Artifacts display	4,000	1993	1993
Tewaukon wildlife photo collage	4,000	1997	
Tewaukon Wetland Management District panel	3,000	1996	
Refuge maps with lights	7,000	1996	
Private lands panel	5,000	1998	
Upgrade pheasant exhibit with small birds	1,000	1992	1992
Touch table exhibit	8,000	1995	
Neo-tropical bird display	8,000	1995	
Develop interpretive panels for attached visitor center kiosk	8,000	1997	
Develop auto tour and interpretive information	23,000	1997	
Develop hunting and fishing regulations leaflet	3,000	1995	
Replace kiosks and add new interpretive panels	25,000	1995	
Develop site specific environmental education curriculum	8,000	1997	
Replace and upgrade boat ramp facilities	35,000	1995	
Replace all cable gates with pipe gates and attach necessary safety markers		1996	
Update Hunting/Fishing Plans	--	1996	